

DAILY STAR TAKE IT HOME



EYE CANDY:
Johnny Depp
heads the
stunning cast

Chocs away in a sweet treat

TOP TIP
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG)
SOME kids just never listen – like spoiled Veruca (Julia Winter) for example. She's one of five lucky youngsters who win a tour of strange sweet-maker Willy Wonka's even stranger factory – but when she stupidly ignores Willy's warning "Don't touch that squirrel's nuts!" the rascally rodents carry her off.

The ranks of supersquirls able to shell nuts better than any mere machine are just one of the feast of superb surreal sights conjured up by director Tim Burton for his marvellous magical remake of Roald Dahl's children's classic.

Johnny Depp, white-faced, black-wigged and deliciously daffy, is right at the top of his game as weird Willy.

He gives a funny, spectacularly entertaining performance that's the cherry on the top of this tasty confection.

Dazzling design and super special effects create a mouth-watering wonderland of chocolate waterfalls, edible grass,

WIN THE DVD

TO celebrate the home release of Charlie And The Chocolate Factory on Monday, we have 10 lip-smacking goodie bags up for grabs, courtesy of Warner Bros Home Entertainment.

The bags contain the deluxe two-disc edition DVD, plus a T-shirt, a giant inflatable Wonka bar, a Hopperball, a Superball, a bookmark, a mug and a floaty pen – so what are you waiting for?

For a chance to win, simply answer this question: *In the movie who stars as the famous Mr Willy Wonka?*

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» ALAN FRANK'S DVD VIEW

fudge mines and marshmallow bushes where legions of miniature Oompa Loompas operate Willy's mad machinery.

Burton's madcap imagination never flags – a cow is whipped to produce whipped cream (what else) – Willy tells the kids "Even I'm edible, but that's cannibalism" and he stirs in witty send-ups of movies such as The Fly and 2001.

Helena Bonham Carter is just right as Charlie's mother, James Fox is the perfect pompous Englishman as Veruca's father and there isn't a single poor performance in this fine, fabulous family fantasy.

VERDICT: 10/10

FAMILY CHOICE

MILLIONS (12) WHEN seven-year-old Alex Etel and his older brother Lewis McGibbon find a fortune in banknotes, idealistic young Lewis wants to do good with the cash while cynical Lewis wants to buy property.

Director Danny Boyle uses Frank Cottrell Boyce's ingenious screenplay and the unforced charm of his appealing young leads to

revive the spirit of Ealing with a sweet comic family film that's a real pleasure to watch from start to end.

It's set just before ster-

ling has to be exchanged for euros, so given what the Brits think about the euro, it's obviously a fantasy.

It's also one of the most

enjoyable British films

in ages and perfect for

parents and children.

VERDICT: 7/10

BEST BUY

RISING DAMP: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION (PG) (GRANADA DVD £29.99)

FRANCES de la Tour, who sports a mad Russian accent in Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire, is hilarious as the object of creepy landlord Leonard Rossiter's lust in this classic small screen series.

ITV never produced a funnier sitcom, thanks to sparkling scripts and Rossiter's unforgettable comic portrayal of Rigsby.

His racist, bigoted, randy but sexually unfulfilled landlord remains one of the very greatest TV greats.

VERDICT: 8/10

Billy Bob's really an ace safecracker who, with his midget evil elf accomplice, robs the store safe after the shoppers leave. And then a savvy store detective unmasks them and demands half the haul...

Other tasty ingredients of this lewd, rude and disgracefully enjoyable antidote to traditional Yuletide cheer include a woman who is turned on by Billy Bob's Santa costume.

If you're in the mood for a splendidly fart, deeply black comedy that leaves little untaunted by its hilarious all-out vulgarity, then Billy Bob and Co provide it.

VERDICT: 8/10

BEST OF THE REST

BAD SANTA (15) (SONY DVD)

Give three cheers for a raucous, riotous comedy that's so monumentally and magnificently tasteless it makes American Pie resemble a Girl Guide pageant.

If Scrooge were alive, this supremely cynical show would be his favourite film.

The best thing you can say about Billy Bob Thornton's drunken, foul-mouthed ex-jailbird is that he's out of jail and snarling sarcastically at surprised kids during his annual stint working as a department store Santa. But in fact, the job's just a cover –

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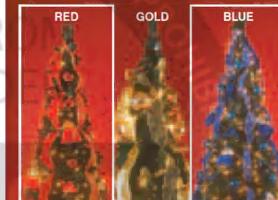
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THEY MAY HAVE FOUND FAME, BUT WHAT HAPPENS



Age: 36. X-Factor winner, 2004. Career span: Eight months CHEESY crooner Steve Brookstein was a surprise winner.

Yes, he had the mature looks, the twinkle in his eyes and a velvety voice, but did he really have that X-Factor?

Well, no.

Just eight months after winning over the viewers, Steve was dropped by his label Sony BMG.

Despite hitting the number one slot with his debut single Against All Odds, he saw his album Hearts

STEVE BROOKSTEIN

and Souls flop and the housewives' favourite was cruelly binned.

He then lashed out at the hit show's creator and judge, Simon Cowell, 46.

"I was never one of Simon's priorities," he moaned. "Simon Cowell is Simon's priority. The

show gives you a platform but then pulls the rug from under your feet.

"It should be about music and talent, but it's not. It's about killing music to make light entertainment."

Never mind, Steve. At least you've still got the consolation of the live music.

The flopstar was recently on the bill at the three-hour mega Chartbusters concert with Girls Aloud and Rachel Stevens, 27 – at Butlins, Minehead!

HARSH

★ THE heat is on as the current series of X Factor gears up for its final few tense weeks before a new pop champ is crowned.

Tomorrow is likely to see more tears, as yet another hopeful waves goodbye to their dreams on the hit ITV1 show.

★ But does even the victorious wannabe have a real shot at the chart stardom they crave?

Well, the evidence suggests not. Reality TV has spawned a host of Next Big Things – but how many have enjoyed lasting success?

Make a list and you'll struggle to get any further than Will Young, 26, Lemar, 27 and Girls Aloud.

★ The truth is that winning a talent show and capturing the hearts of the record-buying public are two completely different things. And for

By PHIL BOUCHER and KATE JACKSON

most reality TV hopefuls, fame proves to be horrifically fickle.

★ Six months after the show, the vast majority are thrown on the scrap heap, with no record contract and no chance of making the big time.

Most simply try to live off their 15 minutes of fame for as long as possible in pubs and clubs all over the country.

★ As these reality TV winners prove, success in the X-Factor, Pop Idol or the BBC's Fame Academy doesn't mean a thing in the real world.

In fact, it can be a one-way-ticket to obscurity.



Age: 27. Won Fame Academy in 2002.

Career span: 14 months AFTER winning the hearts of doe-eyed teenage girls and middle aged women across the country, the Scottish cutie bagged a number one in the charts with Stop Living the Lie.

Four months later, he recorded a number 3 with Don't Let Go... and 10 months later, he quit!

As part of his prize, David was handed the keys to a luxury London apartment, but when he announced his showbiz departure, the Paisley-born songster moved back

DAVID SNEDDON

to his mum's house in Glasgow.

According to his record label, "he was never entirely comfortable with living the life of a pop star, and all the attention that entails".

David went back to his musical roots and set up a rock band, The Sham, to play pub gigs.

He later poured scorn on the talent show which made him a household name. He said: "I'm cross-

ing my fingers people don't remember me from Fame Academy and accept me as a singer-songwriter doing contemporary rock.

"I was fed up with the way I was perceived after Fame Academy and my record label, Mercury, wanted me to do ballad after ballad. That's not the kind of music I do."

Sneddon appeared at last year's Hogmanay celebrations in Aberdeen, starring alongside Deacon Blue and Hue And Cry.

Just like the New Year fireworks, his career seems to have fizzled out in spectacular style.

TO THE WINNERS WHEN THE PUBLIC STOP CARING?

reality



MICHELLE McMANUS

Age: 25. Won Pop Idol 2 in 2003.

Career span: Still limping along

BY winning Pop Idol, the Scottish heavyweight split the nation. Some applauded the 22-stone lass for proving you don't have to be stick thin to have talent.

And there were those who thought the whole thing was a sham, and the porky singer had only won with the sympathy vote.

It didn't matter who was right, because just 113 days after stealing the honour, Michelle's second single limped into the charts at number 16 after selling the paltry amount of 8,000 copies.

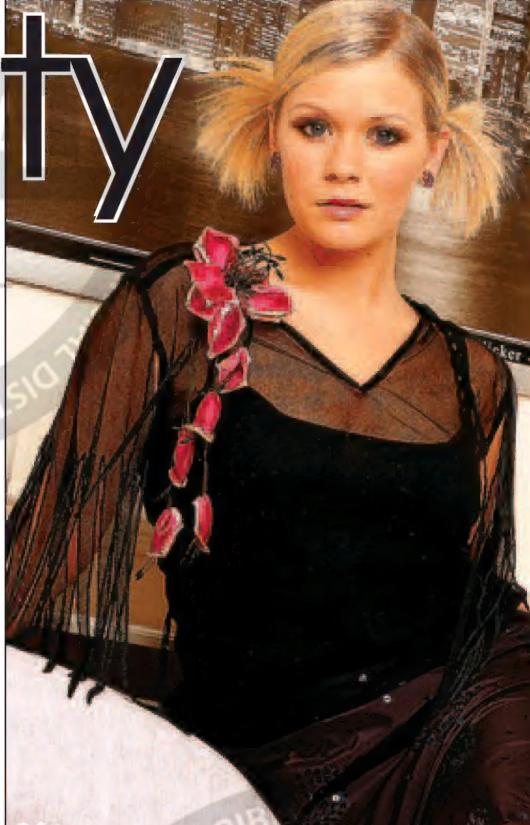
Michelle was dropped by her management firm soon after, and pop sven-gali Simon Cowell announced: "Michelle does not have a future as a recording artist. The public decided they didn't want to buy her records."

Of course, being out of work gave Michelle plenty of time to work on her other project – losing half her body weight.

With a little help from Channel 4's You Are What You Eat, Michelle has lost an incredible eight stone.

Earlier in the year she announced she'd like to lose 10 stone before Christmas and has now secured a new record deal, with a new album currently scheduled for next year.

For the sake of music lovers everywhere, let's hope she tucks into the mince pies and choccies!



HAPPY DAZE: Suzanne, top, with the rest of Hear'Say and with love-rat Darren Day, above

Age: 21. Runner-up in Pop Idol 2002

Career span: 20 months.

DESPITE losing out to Will Young, Gareth was the teen pin-up in March 2002 and notched up three No.1s in the space of 18 months.

He also secured a £750,000 contract with Pepsi and a £1million deal with Wella hair gel.

But at the height of his powers Gareth turned from sweet chorister into boozy bad boy and made the career

GARETH GATES

threatening mistake of sleeping with glamour model Kate Price.

Tales of his sexual prowess soon became public knowledge – along with suggestions that the Brighton beauty stole his cherry.

The pressure of fame then told on his famous stutter, rendering the Bradford crooner virtually mute. In a

rare interview, he explained: "My career became my number one priority. I learned the moment you make your speech number two in your life is the moment things get difficult and you relapse and I did."

To add to his woes, Gareth's second album limped to only Number 11 in the charts. He then committed career

hara-kiri by arguing with his record boss Simon Cowell.

"Gareth sat down and said he wanted to be more like Justin Timberlake," says Cowell.

"I advised him: 'Look, I just don't believe this is you!'"

It's now two years since Gareth released any music at all.

But he has conquered his stutter and is now a speech therapist.

At least he's got something to fall back on.

Age: 24. Won Popstars in 2001.

Career span: 542 days

BLONDE cutie Suzanne was the bubbly sex kitten in Hear'Say – the original popstars – and helped to record the fastest selling Number 1 ever with debut single Pure & Simple.

But since the band split in March 2002 the Bury-born lass has become more famous for her explosive on/off relationship with serial love rat Darren Day.

On Mother's Day 2005, the blonde beauty was left holding the baby after Darren, 37, said he didn't "do family" and walked away from their newborn son Corey Mackenzie.

Darren has since done everything in his power to woo Suzanne back – but he's also been caught in a series of lurid sex and drugs revelations.

But it may have worked: rumour is that Suzanne has let the heartbreaker back into

SUZANNE SHAW

their £2million mansion and may even have rekindled their relationship. But like the career of Hear'Say, it may be only a matter of time before the good times take a turn for the worse.

Suzanne explains: "Things got really personal in Hear'Say. Mylene was being called a bitch every day by people in the street and we were being called w**ers wherever we went."

"It all got too much. We were travelling three hours to a roadshow only to be booed by the crowd. So we knew it was time to call it a day."

"It is like a pair of trainers – one minute they're in and the next minute, they're out."

Suzanne can't bin Darren quite so easily.

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FIGHTIN' TALK

Edited by
PATRICK LENNON
e-mail: patrick.lennon@dailystar.co.uk

Thank you, Eddie

GREAT MAN TAKEN FAR TOO SOON

THE death of Eddie Guerrero on Sunday morning struck the wrestling world a cruel blow.

Once again, a young and talented man has lost his life, leaving a wife and three young children behind him. He was just 38 years old.

An army of fans worldwide will mourn his loss. People Guerrero entertained despite his own intense personal difficulties. His friends are distraught – Chris Benoit's emotion on RAW spoke volumes.

A great man and a great wrestler has been taken far too soon, made all the more significant by the fact that Eddie's story should have ended far better than on the floor of a hotel bathroom in Minneapolis.

FT doesn't have nearly enough room on this page to properly chronicle the life and career of one of the finest wrestlers ever to lace up a pair of boots.

The man we know as Eddie Guerrero was born Eduardo Gori Guerrero Llanes on October 9, 1967, in Ciudad Jerez in Mexico.

He died on Sunday 13 November 2005 a global superstar. FT does not want to patronise fans by embarking upon an account of his life, there's plenty of obituaries on the web.

FT's tribute is to recount a story about Eddie. It is from someone who had the honour of meeting and speaking with a man we much admired.

Eddie Guerrero was a human being. It's why people were able to relate to him. People might harp on about his addiction problems, but many of us in everyday life succumb to a worse degree.

Humility

Some will say that Eddie Guerrero is dead because he was an addict. Others will say it was because Eddie made a living as a professional wrestler.

I had the honour of interviewing Eddie during his run as WWE Champion last year. We spoke at length on the telephone, and I subsequently met him in LA and during the NEC run on tour last May.

He spoke of reaching the pinnacle of his profession, of his pride in his achievements with an incredible and touching humility.

Eddie Guerrero spoke openly of the pressure he felt as champion of the WWE, and of the responsibility he had to the company, the fans, his family and the wrestlers who supported him from below on the undercard. He was aware of a debt of gratitude he felt he owed to the people who had backed him through the darkest periods of his life.

He spoke of his faith, his Christian beliefs, and how

HAVE A GO TRIBUTES

IT'S a great loss to the WWE and his family who we all know he loved greatly. Eddie, we are all going to miss you and thank you for all that you have done.

Adam Robertson

I LIKE to think he really would be handing God that "I'm Your Papi" T-shirt.

Matt Barnes
sharpshooterwrestling.co.uk

I AM saddened by his death. I would like to send out my wishes and prayers for his family. He was a great wrestler and will be truly missed by all fans.

Jay Birkenhead

IT must be the first time I have cried over the death of a wrestler. It is time wrestling cleaned up its act.

Lesroy, Hanley

they had been a source of strength to him on his rocky road back to health.

Eddie suffered life threatening injuries in a car accident at the end of 1999, and returned to wrestling far too soon. He admitted this should have been a wake up call for him to clean up, but that it didn't register.

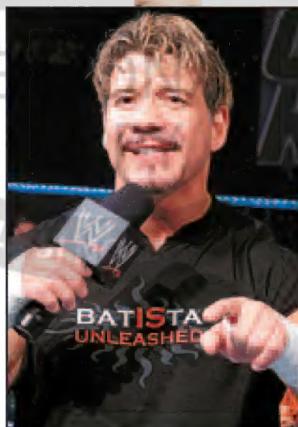
Demons

It was only in 2001, when he was caught drink-driving, and fired, that the penny finally dropped. His addiction to drink, drugs and painkillers stemming from the accident had become the albatross round his neck.

I was backstage at Smackdown in Birmingham when my friend spotted Eddie and introduced me. He remembered me and our conversation from



WRESTLING GIANT:
Guerrero in action
and, right, cutting a
mean, tough figure
outside the ring

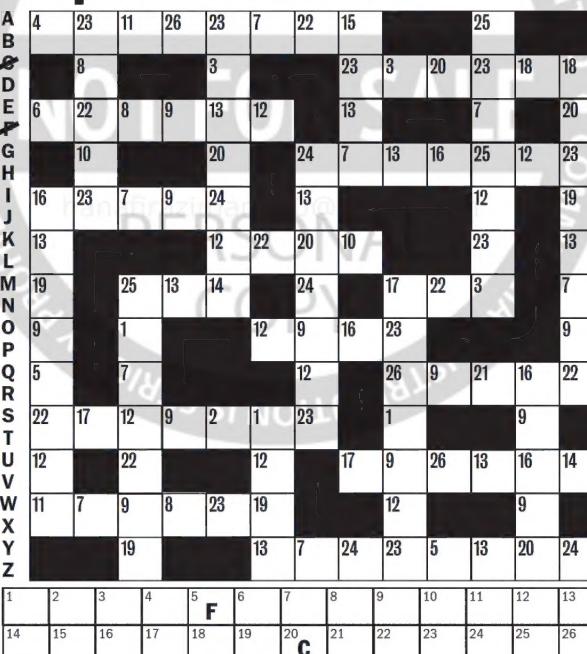


CHAMP: Eddie shouts the odds

HAVE A GO: Get a grip of your views and e-mail patrick.lennon@dailystar.co.uk

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CRYPTIC CLUES
ACROSS
3 Wildly Gran hails earthly paradise! (7,2)

7 It's around a fight (5)
8 Desert plants behave in the Channel Islands (5)
9 It has to reveal different lift (8)
10 This kind of hat is a cracker! (5)
13 Sink into the miseries again (3)
15 Reg has beer to entertain well (6)
16 Team's time for a snack (6)
17 Don't start on meat to have food (3)
19 Wood for going on board (5)
23 New girl broadcasting should be well-mannered (8)
24 Dance for a doctor in South America (5)
25 Uniform for doctor on English ship (5)

26 How employers of graduates are impressed - gradually! (2,7)

DOWN

1 Listen to roof collapse? (9)
2 Like egghead's party on Mediterranean (5)
3 Coal layer round end of shaft is power source (5)
4 A record North America raised for African country (6)
5 Move a new rake to stir things up again! (8)
6 Machine that turns out woodwork (5)
11 Encounter quick way to beat traffic (3,6)
12 Hateful for men with a bald development (8)
13 Look makes some of these exciting (3)
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION: ACROSS - 1 Meat paste, 7 Mecca, 9 Stiletto, 11 Trent, 12 Sleeves, 14 Coca, 15 Owe, 17 Spa, 18 Lace, 20 Nowhere, 23 Final, 24 Partisan, 26 Spree, 27 Lip reader. DOWN: 2 Easel, 3 Twine, 4 Sift, 5 Emotion, 6 Battleaxe, 8 Crevasse, 10 Eden, 12 Swordfish, 13 Eyeliner, 16 Scalpel, 19 Bout, 21 Hostal, 22 Rinse, 25 Rip.

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to **83426** and we will text the extra letter clues direct to your mobile.

*Texts cost £1 plus normal network operator rate.

Full solution: **0905 072 1810**

Across only: **0905 072 1812**

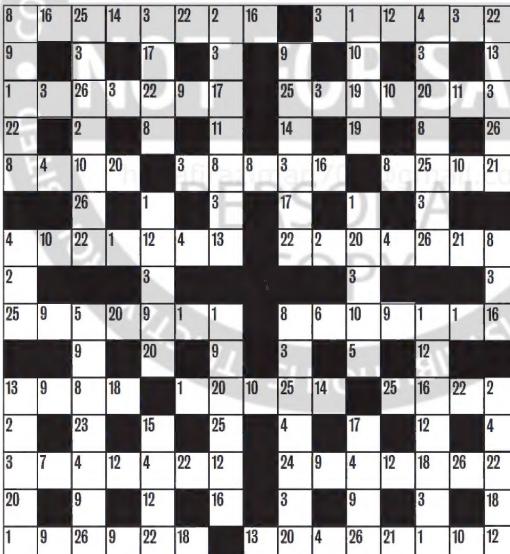
Down only: **0905 072 1813**

Calls cost 75p a minute from a BT landline (Av. Call length 90 secs).

Last Friday's solution

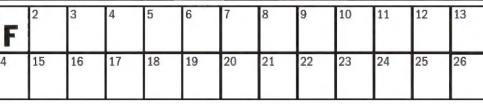
Across: Pidgin, Budget, Log, Regal, Flung, King, Glint, Unto, Feigned, Toxin, Gusto, Disgust, Edgy, Judge, Sing, Dwell, Nasal, Gay, Stigma, Gloves.

Down: Like, Agreed, Ingenue, Suggest, Garb, Grow, Clog, Nag, Lieu, Guinea, Belong, Zing, Sag, Daft, Stag, Also, Equinox, Shingle, Ground, Ugly.



● Alphapuzzle books: Volume 10 is now available. To order at £6.99 - or order Vol 3 at the same price (UK postage is FREE), please send cheque or postal order to: Express Bookshop, PO Box 200, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4WJ, phone 0871 434 6095 with your credit card number or online at www.expressbookshop.com

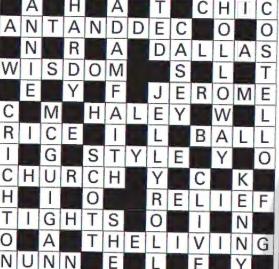
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

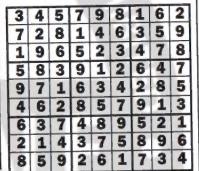
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

ON SHOW



Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all of the digits from one to nine.
Level: Moderate
Target: 24 mins

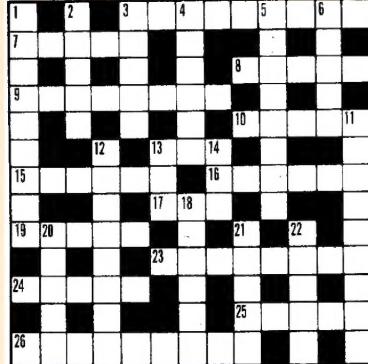
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



Extra clues: 0905 072 0302 Today's solution: 0905 072 0301

MORE PUZZLES IN TOMORROW'S **DAILY STAR**

Two sets of clues, but the answers are the same
ANSWERS TOMORROW



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FORUM

FROM RANTS TO
JOKES, IT'S THE
BIT YOU WRITE

TEXT MANIACS

TEXT DSTAR
TO 61616

Text DSTAR followed by a space, then your name and comment, and send to 61616. Texts cost 25p plus your normal mobile operator cost.

6 Anti-terror schemes
going down the Tube

underground safer, paul? i took the entry permit course this week and was shocked to find that 4 of the 10 sitting it didn't even hold a passport for own country and could gain the all-access pass with basic id! gateway to next 7/7. DOUGIE, essex

anyone else notice how the £80 on the spot fine 4 being drunk has coincided with the new laws on drinkin hours? Yet another stealth tax from the thieving labour muppets! Gary, Telford

Is 24hr drinking to make up the losses in tax for banning smoking? Jezebel

2 all lgv drivers out there! If you drive a brand new lgv from jan u will need the new swipe card it is part of licence it cost £38 lasts 5 years and driver has 2 pay on top of price 4 licence. Another tax? Peter

Judging by the cost of council tax, think I'll take up refuse collecting or fitting st lights. Must be a goldmine! VOICEY

HOW CAN WE EXPECT GOOD GOVT WHEN 2 PARTY LEADERS ACT LIKE CHILDREN CALLING EACH OTHER NAMES? ELECT A PRESIDENT TO RUN COUNTRY - BEST MAN TO DO IT WOULD B SIR R. BRANSON. GOD & SON

Monk, the marines are far more elite than paras, so are sbs compared to sas. Kemper
fae ay

iv served with marines and paras on tours, marines best by far at least they have brains! SAPPER

In '82, para's 1st in 2 Stanley 2 raise flag. It was marines wot LOST Falklands! MEATHHEAD, NOTTS

MOST OF SAS + ME R X PARAS SO WORK IT OUT! MARINES R GOOD AT THEIR JOB THO, DESERVE RESPECT. ANDY, PETERBORO

Angel got it wrong - it's not the schools that are to blame, it's all the hopeless parents! IGGYBOY

My eldest daughter goes 2 C of E school, but had 2 ask me how 2 spell Jesus - all they teach in R.E. is Ramadan & Diwali. Roy the Hun

my daughter has just made a prayer mat, learning about islam! she's 7. I'm not a happy man. SI, COV

Big well done to all the peeps stickin up 4 the queen, traditional RE and Barbie dolls! What has England come to when kids can't mention our own national anthem? C'mon DSTAR start a campaign. Sally

MOAN ON
THE PHONE

HAVE a rant! If there's something you want to get off your chest, call our new mega moan line. Ring 0905 028 0055 and follow the instructions. Calls are 25p a minute on a BT landline.



pussycat dolls new song stick wit u is the best. can u show a pic of the gorgeous girls? dan, brough

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APPEAL

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Me and Johnny Vegas in st helens. ANON

It'll send birth rate up

Birth rate will b up! im a celeb get me out on at 9pm - early 2 bed! BARRY Wxm
 Wish lucy pinder had been picked 4 in a celeb. She is da only celeb i wntd 2 c! DAREN IN BELFAST
 Xfactor and talent, the two don't go 2gther, all tone deaf crybabies! Xpepper
 Best singers who audition for X Factor are turned away at the 1st off-camera auditions. I know of 6 girls who would blow any tv celebs away,

but same answer given: "You're not what we're looking for." ie mediocre. A. Singer
 AXE Factor. Producers know who got least phone votes, that's who shud have gone, but that's not ratings grabbing TV is it? Kev, HX
 If people r so outraged, don't watch JOKE FACTOR, I won't watch it again, its s**t. Lucy, Monmouthshire
 giv louis a break, maria has made it anyhow, he done rite. robk, n. ireland

I am proud Gary Barlow never sunk to Robbie's level. Remember where you came from Robbie. QUINNY
 I think Robbie Williams was really childish about Gary Barlow. Rob, Gary was there! It was years ago, u r so childish. TULIP
 What is Aled Jones for? He can barely sing n has the charisma of a proton! Cringe-inducing for us Welsh! But a hit with the blue rinsed bible bashers! A. Welshman

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LAUGH

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Q: WHAT do a stork and a tax inspector have in common? A: They can both stick their bills up their backsides.

TONY HUMBLE, Glasgow

A FLAT-CHESTED girl wanted to make the most of her assets. So instead of wearing a bikini top on holiday, she stuck two magnifying glasses to her boobs.

She was arrested for making a spectacle of herself.

J. R. WEST, Cwmbran, Gwent.

Jokes by text...

SAINT George was invited to a cross-dressing party. As he arrived, he said: "Do you like me with my drag on?" TBC LADS

A COUPLE were on safari in Africa. Suddenly, a lion ran out of the bushes, grabbed the woman and started to drag her away. She screamed: "Quick - shoot, shoot!" Her husband replied: "I can't - I've run out of film." DEBS, Manchester

Text DSJOKE (space) name and joke to 61616.

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EMAILS

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£10 LETTER

TONY BLAIR keeps saying he wants a fairer deal for the world's poor.

It's a pity he doesn't walk our own streets, where he'd find around 380,000 sleeping rough.

The streets are freezing at this time of year. It's about time he looked after his own people.

JOHN McDONALD, South Ockendon, Essex.

I DO hope the Labour Party is planning to hold a proper election for a new leader when Tony Blair finally steps down.

They can't simply appoint Gordon Brown, who I reckon would be even worse than Blair. I hope a few MPs challenge him and force a real battle for the job.

Mr W. W. McCORMACK, Dundee.

I'VE never been a fan of Jamie Oliver. I'd never let him near anything I'd want to eat - especially since he appears to spit every time he talks!

But he really has gone too far by slaughtering a lamb on his telly show (Daily Star, November 11). It seems he's now gone from "dinner lady" to Satanist.

JOAN WEST, Bolton.

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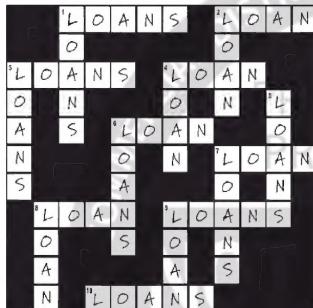
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GIVE US A STEER

Q HELP! I'm 32 and trying to get insurance for my new car. I've been driving company cars for more than 10 years, but have never taken out my own insurance.

All the quotes I've got have been very expensive. Can the driving experience I've gained really be worthless?

A There is no hard and fast rule. Find a broker, give them details of your driving experience and ask them to make it clear to insurers that you have been driving for over 10 years.

An understanding insurance company may award you a couple of years' no-claims-bonus.

PARKER'S CAR GUIDES

Your motoring questions answered by the experts www.parkers.co.uk

Q Lots of dealers seem to be offering 0% finance on new cars at the moment.

Some of them are asking for a large deposit and/or just a year or two to pay the balance. Are these the only catches?

A Most interest-free finance is via HP (hire purchase) agreements. The car remains the finance company's property and is effectively hired until the end of the agreement.

Zero per cent finance deals are usually based on the full price, so there's no chance of a discount up front. Also, remember that by the time you have repaid the outstanding balance, your car may be worth less than half of what you paid for it.

Q FANCY a second-hand BMW 7 Series, Mercedes S-Class, Audi A6 or Jaguar XJ? Well now's the time to buy, according to used car experts Glass's. There are so many prestige motors around, like the Merc E-Class, BMW 5 Series, Audi A6 and Jag S-Class that demand for big luxury cars is plummeting - along with their second-hand values. Sales of these types of models have fallen by more than 25% over the past five years, while during the past year alone second-hand values have dropped from 67% of the original list price, to just 57% for a one-year-old, 12,000-mile car.



TOP MOTOR: Clio is the Car of the Year

Cli-oh so brilliant

HOW about this for a sales boost? Just a few weeks after it hit showrooms in Britain the Renault Clio was this week voted European Car of the Year.

In fact, four-door versions became available only two days ago, but as sales began in Europe last October, most of the 58 judges (six are from the UK) had plenty of time to drive it.

The Clio was praised for "its record cabin space, road-holding, remarkable fit and finish and five-star crash test result". One of the judges, Autocar's Steve Cropley, said: "It was a very tough contest and the Clio won by just four points, leaving the VW Passat a close second. The latest Clio has brought

much-improved refinement and trim quality to the car, along with improved road presence and rear cabin space."

From the hundreds of new cars to hit the roads in the last year, a short-list of seven were picked for final judging.

Results: 1) Renault Clio (256 pts); 2) VW Passat (251); 3) Alfa 159 (212); 4) BMW 3-series (203); 5) Mazda 5 (198); 6 (all the same car) Citroen C1, Peugeot 107, Toyota Aygo (187); 7) Toyota Yaris (143).

Put this on your swish list



SIMON Swish was feeling very clever as he drove home from another money-making business meeting.

It was dark, and the dozens of red lights on his dashboard were glowing in the same relaxed way that reflected the self-satisfied feel he had about himself.

Another mug had fallen for his charm and signed up an entire company to his totally useless insurance scam.

That's the trouble with women bosses, he thought. That Rachael bird may have been too dim, too idle, or most likely both, to read the small print, but you could see how she got to the top. Very pretty.

He was just deciding to get her drunk and take her to the cheap hotel he usually used, when his gorgeous wife, Haley, opened the front door and kissed him.

Sorry folks, it's Motormouth here now and I know what you're thinking. We don't like Simon, do we?

And why not? After all, we've already discovered that he's smug, oily, arrogant, prejudiced against women and that he not only cheats in his job but cheats on his wife too.

Trouble is, there's simply no justice in the world. And while honest folk such as you toil for an honest pound, rats like Simon end up paying 42 grand for a loaded Audi A6.

But why an A6? Why not the even bigger A8? That decision was easy.

He could afford an A8, no problem. But it's massive. Just that bit too much "look at me" in company car

parks, and he didn't want to appear quite so successful. No. Never lose the sympathy vote, thought Simon, as he craftily wrote his cheque for the smaller A6, which from the outside is subtle yet smart. Like the discreet entrance to a gentleman's club.

He had chosen the 2.7 TDI quattro, added to the range last June, with an all new diesel engine.

Because of its near 42mpg average and lower emissions it fell into a cheaper tax band, but that didn't mean it wasn't fast. Simon was still able to tail-gate other drivers, like a motorway ram-raider.

The price list showed that it should have cost just under 30 grand, but Mr Taxman wasn't going to get away with anything as cheap as that. Oh no.

Alloys

Even the standard car came with a three-page, 70-strong package of features, such as a CD player in the glove box and a push-button, electric hand-brake, but Simon wanted a few comforting extras. Well, to be precise, £12,000-worth of extras. That should make a dent in his tax bill.

Flesh silver paint-job? We'll have that for £600. Leather trim? Only £1,625. Digital radio, a telly (honest), a car phone and a surround sound system? Chuck it all in for £2,425.

What else would sir want? The air-suspension is nice at £1,500. Oh, and don't forget the 12-speaker, 18-inch alloys for another £1,600.

In fact, the price list adds 18 pages of optional equipment, including six steering wheel choices, and six pages of colour and trim.

By now even Simon was reeling, but he still added a £1,750 sat-nav

FACT FILE

Audi A6 2.7 TDI quattro.

PRICE (on the road): £29,845. (range: £24,340 - £43,540).

ENGINE: It's a lightweight 2,698cc, vermicular graphite cast iron V6, 24-valve, with common rail high pressure direct injection - turbocharged and intercooled (with 176bhp, 281lb torque).

TOP SPEED: 143 mph; 0-62 mph: 8.1 secs.

MPG: Urban: 29.4; extra urban: 54.3; combined: 41.5.

CO₂: 181g/km.

INS GROUP: 15.

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MOTOR MOUTH

By
GEORGE
FOWLER



HAVING trouble selling your house? It's quite possible buyers are being put off by your neighbour's car! A Network Q survey shows that having a banger next door can cost you thousands or completely ruin your chances of selling. House-owners are forced to drop prices by an average 5.5%, meaning £10,170 off the typical UK house price of £184,924 or £32,400 off a detached house in Greater London (£589,590). Most snooty area is Scotland, where 45% of buyers refuse to even put in a bid.

system, heated, electric front seats (£1,000), eye-crippling Xenon headlights (£775), rear parking buzzers (£300), a "Comfort" air-con system (£375) and a £200 "lighting package".

Total price: £42,000. Did Simon care? No, he couldn't give a stuff. In fact, he'd missed out on the electric steering wheel, which raises itself so it's not in your way when you get in or out, for £300, along with an electric rear window blind at £25.

Well, there you go, that's the A6. Depending on how much you're prepared to pay, it can be from anything from an executive rep-mobile to a full-blown luxury limo.

Anything else you need to know? Oh yes, ... does it drive well? Does it handle? Is it comfy? What's the boot like? Not surprisingly, all these boxes

come fully ticked. It's phenomenally quick and, strangely for a big diesel, the power isn't all in mid range. It rockets away from the lights like a sports car.

The handling is fantastic. Again, it defies its size, feeling curiously light and nimble as it pings along the road.

Vast

Is it comfy? It's so relaxed it should have been made in the Caribbean. And then there's the boot. I mention this only because it's so vast. You see, even though it's a saloon, the back seats split-fold to form a perfectly flat cargo area that's 6ft 7in deep and 3ft 7in wide. I've slept in smaller beds.

Though not as many as Simon.

IMAGE

REAR MIRROR MONSTER: Seen one Audi, seen 'em all. Huge, menacing, brutal and, as I said a few weeks ago "pass the shotgun".

BACKSIDE BEAUTY: Quite busy, with lots of bendy lines, Audi's four-ring logo in the middle, A6 badge on the left, 2.7 TDI on the right and chrome-tipped exhaust pipes each side. Fairly smart.

PLAYTIME PLEASER: Climate control, cruise control, trip computer, electric windows, heated, electric, folding mirrors, rain sensitive wipers, light-sensitive headlights, remote locking, CD-stereo.

NAUGHTY NIGGLES: Huge and heavy doors slam back into you unless you find the miracle of a space big enough to open them wide.

TASTY TOUCHES: The glove box doesn't have a handle. It's operated by a little switch on the dashboard. Flash, eh?

FAST OR LAST: Remarkably quick, and quiet too. It would be dead easy to get nicked for accidentally speeding.

WONGA WONDER: Basic car is fantastic value, but add-ons are anything but cheap.

WOULD AN ESSEX GIRL LIKE IT? No chance. It's a husband's car that's too big and nothing like flash enough for Tracey. Anyway, her ideal fella's got a 3-Series BMW.

BRITISH motorists fall out of love with their cars after just four months of owning them. A massive survey by Dixon Motors shows that's when more than half of all motorists stop regularly washing or cleaning them. Many owners don't even bother to drive carefully, resulting in scruffy alloys from being kerbed. Other results of neglect are damaged paintwork from dried bird muck, dented bonnets from having shopping dumped on them, chipped doors

caused by careless opening and sweets stuck to the seats. The annual amount lost in second-hand values totals £2.8 billion a year.

IF you're one of the 1.2 million selfish idiots driving around without insurance then as far as I'm concerned you have no place in society, never mind on the road. That's why normal motorists will be delighted by a crackdown on uninsured drivers which started last week. Police can now use automatic number plate recognition cameras to

spot and ultimately seize and destroy cars being driven without insurance. The cameras are linked to a database which contains details of all vehicles registered in the UK which are believed to be uninsured. The brain-dead who think they're clever currently add around £30 to the average annual £385 insurance bill for you, me and 38 million other motorists. Transport Secretary Alistair Darling said: "People are rightly fed-up with anti-social drivers. We are absolutely determined to rid the roads of them."

WIN Day of your life at Silverstone

THINK you're a tasty driver?

Then here's your chance to prove it. This week I've got FIVE fantastic Silverstone Driving Experience vouchers just waiting to be won.

Yep, this is your chance to show what you can really do in either a single-seater racing car, a

rally car, the amazing Lotus Exige or a mind-blowing Caterham.

And of course, if you don't fancy blasting around Silverstone yourself, one of these brilliant vouchers will make the ideal Christmas present, as well as saving you a stack of cash because they're currently on special offer.

Silverstone offers a choice of 13 great Driving Experiences, ranging from a tour of

Silverstone for just £25 right through to a £525 day-long Hyperformance Experience.

These £99 "Christmas Special" vouchers really are terrific value for money.

You get the choice of four experiences, normally each worth £155 and lasting for 2-2½ hours.

These great value vouchers must be used before March 31, 2006, so what are you waiting for?

To win one of our fab five, simply phone 0905 028 0202 and leave your name, address and answer to the question: What's the cost of a "Christmas Special" voucher?

Calls cost 25p on a BT landline. Or text DSMOTOR followed by your name and details to 61616. Texts cost 25p plus your usual network rates.

Winners will be chosen at random by midnight next Thursday and normal rules apply. Good luck!

A fantastic Silverstone Driving Experience is guaranteed to set hearts racing this Christmas. Visit: www.silversstone-circuit.co.uk or call 08704 588 270.



Why we'll all lust for this Lexus

NEEDLESS to say, most of you will be visiting your nearest Lexus showroom tomorrow, clutching your cheques for £22,400, when this little beaut, the Lexus IS 250 goes on sale.

And with second-hand values forecast at even better than Britain's most sought-after used car, the BMW 3 Series, that might not be a bad idea. With 204 bhp from its 2.5-litre motor,

the IS 250 hits 0-62 mph in 8.1 secs on its way to a sizzling 144 mph. So it's sold, then?

Not quite. In January a 2.2-litre diesel goes on sale, with respective performance figures of 8.9 secs and 134 mph. It's not much slower, is it? But where it really does score is on fuel consumption.

The petrol 250 averages 28.8 mpg, while the figure for the diesel 220 is 44.8 mpg. And at £22,200 it will also be 200 quid cheaper.



SECOND BEST: New IS 250 will hold its value

MOTORMOUTH EXTRA

IT'S REAL, AND WHEELY FAST

NO, it's not April 1 and you're not dreaming. This extraordinary eight-wheeler is for real. Developed at Keio University in Japan, the Ellica (Electric Lithium-ion car) is definitely not just another battery-powered, eco-friendly Noddy car. Each of its eight wheels

has its own 81 bhp in-wheel electric motor. And what's 81x8? That's right, a whopping 648 bhp. Each motor also makes 73 lbs/ft of torque. So that's 584 lbs/ft in total.

Translated to the test track it all adds up to 0-60 mph in 4.1 secs, 0-100 in 7 seconds

dead and a top speed of 230 mph, while the car's engineers reckon it would have reached 250mph if the track was less bumpy. In this specification the car has a maximum range of just 125 miles, so a friendlier, road-going version has also been built which has a range of 200 miles and a more practical top speed of 125mph.

Despite the Ellica's limousine-like 5.1 metre length, it only seats four, it weighs 2.4 tonnes and it takes 10 hours to charge the batteries from the mains. But, tyres aside, it's pretty economical to run, working out at 0.08 pence per mile for electricity.

Fancy one? You'd better be quick as they're only going to build about 200, hopefully for a little less than the £185,000 that this one cost, and I'll bet that doesn't include VAT.

TOM STEWART



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sophie howard, lucy pinder, charlotte marshall & michelle marsh



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Big splash is gutter madness

EVERY kid loves to play about in puddles, but when it comes to your car, don't be a child.

Because drivers who laughingly blast along rain-soaked roads risk causing thousands of pounds of damage to their vehicle's engine.

Amazingly, just an egg-cup full of water sucked into a petrol engine can do enough damage to leave you stranded.

But it gets worse for diesel drivers, where only a spoonful of water can cause catastrophic damage.

Danger

The sloping bonnets and lower grilles of modern motors have increased the chances of water finding its way into an engine.

But it's not just your engine that's in danger. Catalytic converters, which work at very high temperatures, can suffer irreparable damage by being submerged in cold water – and are often hugely expensive to replace.

Water high enough to wet carpets may also damage a car's electrical system and even the mechanism

■ By DAVID THOMAS

that triggers airbags, stopping them from going off in an accident. On very wet days, the AA gets up to 1,000 calls an hour for help – double the normal figure – with more than three-quarters affected by rain-damaged electrical systems or engines.

AA Patrolman of the Year, Nick Evers, said: "Unlike a gas, water can't be compressed."

"Even a small amount in the cylinder head means the piston hits the equivalent of a brick wall."

"The shock usually bends the connecting rod or breaks the crankshaft."

"Even worse, the smaller combustion chamber of a diesel engine means that only a tiny amount of

water could lead to a £2,000 bill for a replacement unit. Hitting large puddles only a few inches deep at too high a speed can lead to a bow wave."

"This surges up and hits the fan, which sprays water everywhere."

AA spokesman Gavin Hill-Smith added: "You should drive through flood water at walking pace."

Swamped

"And if it's more than 10 inches deep we strongly advise drivers to avoid it altogether."

"We say that 10 mph through even low levels of water is too fast."

"Also, if a car in front surges through deep water and creates a wave, stay back to avoid getting your engine swamped, and watch your car going the opposite direction."

■ **EVERY day an amazing seven million cars clog up our roads, unnecessarily as a quarter of us lump behind the wheel for a journey we could easily walk ... yet 40% of drivers are fed up with traffic jams. That's the result of a massive survey by Prudential Car Insurance, whose spokesman Philip Southgate said: "Brits are unsurprisingly wedded to their cars. However, a simple change in the way we use them could make a significant difference to everyone. Cutting out short journeys whenever possible will reduce traffic and help the environment. If all the commuters who have only a five-minute drive to work left their car at home just once a week there would be 1.4 million fewer cars on the road each day."**





IT'S a real snack down as trivia treats continue to pour into our brilliant Nobby's Knows column.

Nobby's Crisps fill you up with chunky morsels and Star readers have answered our call for their tastiest tips with equally satisfying life lessons.

Each bag of Nobby's ridged snacks comes with a great piece of knowledge destined to make you the king or queen of pub knowledge.

And each day in our Nobby's Knows column we've been sharing the best trivia and facts as well as readers' most fascinating pub ammo.

Send us your own fantastic fact to get entered into our great car prize draw – or you can solve our daily Number Crunchers for another chance to win this week's hot Honda Civic Type R – see below.

And the search for knowledge is still on – next week we want your most random and fascinating facts for our Pick n Mix theme.

Whether it's an explanation of where a word like hat-trick came from or fascinating facts about the world around us we want you to share your coolest trivia.

Send them to us by texting TRIVIA to 88833 or email us – competition@dailystar.co.uk with NEWS FOR NOBBY'S as the subject header. You can also enter your trivia by following Nobby's link on www.dailysnack.com and watch out for Nobby's Knows – the great column appearing every weekday, only in the Daily Star.

Meanwhile fill up on these great life lessons and tips to help make you the sharpest tool in the box.

Getting Frosty

Leave car windscreens wipers in mid sweep when you park your car at night and it will be easier to remove ice the next day after a frosty night.

Pour a Beer

Get just the right amount of head – by pouring beer into a slightly tilted glass, but with enough welly to allow the beer to develop a nice head of foam

Selling a Car

It's kids' stuff – experts say putting a baby seat in the back seat of your car will help you flog that second hand motor – buyers will assume you're a careful driver.

Cue Up

Don't go potty playing snooker – when making a shot be sure to have your head over the line of the cue so that you're looking down the line of the cue ball and the ball you're trying to pot.

Send out an SOS

If you're stranded in the wilderness your best chances of getting rescued

NOBBY'S KNOWS:

are to make three fires in a triangle about 50 feet apart. This is an international distress signal. This might not work so well if you're lost in Manchester.

The Perfect Penalty

It's the most nerve wracking shot in football. To make sure you don't fluff a penalty keep your eyes on the ball, not the goalkeeper and keep the ball on the ground as you send it flying towards goal.

Muddy Hell

Off roading? If you get your car stuck in the mud use rubber foot mats to stick under the tyres. Rock the car back and forward so that it can get a grip on the mats and motor out of the muck.

Jelly fish Sting

Coke makes the perfect remedy after a jelly fish sting – it neutralises the sting.

Raisin Hell

Impress friends by putting a raisin in a glass of champagne – it will keep floating to the top and sinking to the bottom.

Playing Safe

How to make sure your valuables stay safe from burglars. A cheap security measure is to make a small slit in a tennis ball and put your jewellery and valuables inside. A robber is unlikely to find it. Just make sure you don't use it for a real game.

Vodka Tonic

Vodka makes a great stain remover for grass stains – brilliant for after a game of footie.

Tea Off

Soothe sunburn by putting wet tea bags on your fried skin.

Get Shirty

Hang damp shirts up on hangers straight after washing them and you won't have to iron them so much.

Kissing Tip

Suggest a kiss straight from the Karma Sutra – known as the lip-o-suction it involves the man kissing the woman's top lip while she kisses his bottom lip, then they switch.

Cure Hiccups

Swallow a tablespoon of dry sugar – amazingly this cures hiccups in 19 out of 20 people.

Close Shave

Don't shave as soon as you get out of bed – your skin is puffy from the night's sleep and by waiting for a few minutes this will go away and you'll get a closer shave.



Reader fact file

Wayne, Bedford

Paint Job

Next time you're painting put a piece of cling-film into the bottom of the roller tray. When done, just easily fold out and bin it. No mess, no cleaning.

Jane, Lincoln

Give It A Pasting

Use toothpaste to clean the grout on your tiles, it brings them up a treat!

Sarah, East London

Buttering Up

Use it in traps for mice – they prefer it to cheese.